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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the international meeting of experts described in this document was to discuss policies, strategies, and measures designed to encourage the development and extension of integrated services for early childhood care and education (ECCE). Participants first reviewed the successes, failures, and lessons learned in providing integrated ECCE services, including the effects of government action and economic factors. Participants then discussed the prospects and tasks in developing integrated ECCE services in member states. The unique challenges facing different societies were examined, several counterproductive forces were identified, and recommendations were offered. Participants next studied the priorities and modes of cooperation at the national, regional, and international levels. Specific areas that would benefit from cooperation were suggested. UNESCO's Intersectoral Project on the Young Child in the Family Environment planned for the years 1990-1995 was reviewed. Finally, participants adopted recommendations on child advocacy, dissemination of information, communication between groups, administrative frameworks for ECCE programs, resource development, training, integrated ECCE programs, program evaluation, research, and encouragement of international cooperation. Appendixes include lists of participants and observers, and the meeting agenda. (BC)

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INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF EXPERTS (CATEGORY VI) ON DEVELOPING INTEGRATED SERVICES FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION: POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND PRACTICAL MEASURES

(Unesco House, Paris 4-8 September 1989)

FINAL REPORT

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. An International Meeting of Experts (category VI) on 'Developing Integrated Services for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE): Policies, Strategies and Practical Measures' was organized by Unesco from 4 to 8 September 1989 at Unesco Headquarters. It was attended by 16 participants and 7 observers (Annex I). The World Organization for Early Childhood Education co-operated in making it possible for three participants to attend the meeting.

2. Papers submitted to the participants and observers included an Annotated Agenda (ED-89/617.ECCE/1 Add.) which served as the working document as well as other relevant background documents. Participants and observers contributed documentation. Relevant films were also available for viewing.

3. The meeting was opened by Mr E. Portella, Unesco Deputy Director-General for Programmes, who welcomed the participants and observers. He stressed the importance of what Member States are giving to provide for, and improve the quality of integrated ECCE services for the young child. He insisted that:

> 'The concept of the overall development of the child is broader than the economic, nutritional, health or social components alone. It also means cultural, educational, spiritual and human development for each and everyone together with a respect for the differences between value systems and encouragement for moral content, in a spirit of justice and equity. The overall development is thus a natural right of all the world's children.'

4. The participants elected the following officers of the meeting:

Chairman:	Mr A. Guruge (Sri Lanka)
Vice-Chairpersons:	Mr U. Bronfenbrenner (U.S.A.) Mrs E. Balke (OMEP)
Rapporteur:	Mrs M. Clay (New Zealand)

The discussions covered agenda items 3-6 (see Annex II). Each agenda item was discussed in plenary and in working groups. On the final day of the meeting, the Rapporteur presented a draft final report summarizing the salient points of the discussions and the recommendations of the meeting.

II. GENERAL BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

5. This international meeting of experts (category VI) to discuss policies, strategies and measures designed to encourage the development and extension of integrated services for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Member States was organized within the context of Unesco's programme for the Promotion of Early Childhood Education (24 C/5, para. 02213). It is one in a series of international meetings which Unesco has organized over many years on ECCE, the most recent of which focused on alternative low cost strategies for the development of early childhood education (Paris, 1986).

6. The meeting sought to review the progress made in this field, paying particular attention to the situation of disadvantaged children. It brought together specialists from the various disciplines and regions of the world.

7. ECCE has received increasing attention in recent years, as reflected for example in the importance accorded to preparing a United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - (which was recently ratified) - mainly as a result of:

(a) Recognition of the importance of early education and care for the present and future development of the child, and for the achievement of society's developmental objectives and economic growth.

(b) Recognition of the child as a citizen, with rights to health, nutrition and education.

(c) The felt need for institutionalized arrangements for the care of young children resulting from the increased number of mothers now working outside the home.

(d) The desire of many parents to prepare their children for entry into and success in primary education coupled with the growing awareness in Member States of the long-term importance of early childhood development for the overall national development process, including the cost of later compensation to make up for early neglect.

8. As a result of these and other factors, integrated services for early childhood care and education are beginning to develop in some countries, and are already well established in others. Unesco is searching for more ways and means - in collaboration with other partners - of overcoming the many obstacles which hamper the development and expansion of integrated ECCE services.

9. Participants were thus invited to:

review relevant experiences in providing integrated ECCE services and describe research work in the field and its application, experimental or otherwise, detailing their successes, failures, lessons learnt and policy implications;

explore how the diverse ECCE programmes which often exist within countries may be more efficiently planned, co-ordinated and promoted; and

consider how active co-operation and networking among ECCE programmes at national, regional and international levels can be developed.

10. The meeting agreed that the subject being treated is an urgent one and it is important to communicate the gravity and scope of the matter. There are some basic factors against which this problem (i.e. integrated ECCE Services) need to be studied:

Poverty. This affects a growing number of persons in the world and it is a most destructive force on the hopes of the families and their children.

Health Care and Nutrition are a first step but if this urgent investment is not followed up by a support system to allow families to provide a certain quality of love and stimulation, the investment would be of little significance.

Concerns with the above matters are so important that neglect will also have serious repercussions on the economic life of the community.

To facilitate integration of programmes on health, nutrition and education for young children, the international United Nations agencies

are urged to form an Interagency Working Group. Persons should be identified in each agency to collaborate in the process of integration of these programmes.

III. REVIEW OF RELEVANT EXPERIENCES IN PROVIDING INTEGRATED ECCE SERVICES: SUCCESSES, FAILURES AND LESSONS LEARNT

The meanings of integration

The meeting returned again and again to discussion of the many meanings of the word 'integration'. Two clusters seemed to emerge.

11. One view of integration stressed the need to bridge gaps and breakdown barriers between structures - local groups and communities, the work of different sectors, the contributions of various institutions, the authorities responsible for geographical delivery systems, the available technologies, and knowledgeable professionals, the planning and funding ministries, the national policies and the international funding agencies. It was easy to identify examples of lack of integration but there was less said about the more difficult task of constructively overcoming this. There was a strong opinion that working down from a national policy or up from a local level were both approaches with problems and that change must occur in both directions.

12. A different integration problem could be described. Firstly, at the centre were children who, themselves, had to integrate the experiences provided by ECCE services. Secondly, several participants spoke of the need to examine our concepts of the children, and parents as human beings in interaction. Thirdly, integration might also be a feature of all the services available to the child, with effective links between these services in their work with families. Fourthly, there was general acceptance that a pooling of knowledge and funding from both the governmental sectors (health, education, nutrition, welfare) and non-governmental sectors at the community, provincial and national levels was necessary for effective services and for the expansion and democratization of programmes. Further, it was urged that at the practical level children with special needs should be included in ordinary groups whenever possible.

Experiences with integrated ECCE services

13. One outstanding feature of the discussion was the fact that integrated ECCE services, i.e. health, nutrition, care, education, etc. are limited - even though integration can help to reduce costs. In addition it was observed that little stress was placed on the 0-3 age group and on high risk groups, e.g. poor low income families, minority groups, nomadic populations among others. The major focus of the discussion was in the following areas.

The action of governments

14. Several speakers mentioned moves to adopt international conventions such as the Rights of the Child, or national statements about the role of the State in education (Egypt, Brazil). Moves were reported to integrate the work of several ministries involved with children, families, gender equality and consumer affairs. A National Programme for Child Education, Health, Nutrition, Care (Brazil) and ECCE services 'Before Five' (New Zealand) were described. The National Plan for Child Survival and Development in Colombia was cited as a model of a national, regional and local integrated programme for children under six years.

Participants reported an increasing interest being taken in integrated ECCE services (e.g. Chile, Norway) as resources become available. Others suggested that national co-ordination would not be a reasonable goal but that a government could work towards integration at a State or regional level. It would be appropriate for governments, especially in large countries, to produce guidelines for integrated services, the details of which could be worked out at the local level. A national centre or council concerned with ECCE policies (New Zealand, Egypt) can legitimate ECCE and provide for leadership in fostering developments. However, governments will only be able to achieve an articulation of institutional provision to the extent that local values will allow.

Intergrated services

15. A few integrated programmes were described. The Integrated Child Development Services programme (ICDS) in India was developed in 1975 and has expanded rapidly covering at the present one-fourth of the country. It began in the most backward areas. Available health services were used as the basis for the integration of other services, including education.

Using an existing service to extend into other sectors is one model of implementing an integrated programme, but it calls for simultaneous in-service training to extend the understanding of professionals trained in one area about other aspects of ECCE. Each professional must understand the different roles that are necessary in integrated services.

The Letlhakeag Community pilot project in Botswana was analysed in a paper presented to the meeting (Otaala, 1989). The paper provides a case-study of an integrated child development approach and some analysis of what went wrong and why, and what was successful.

The economic situation

16. Expansion of services for ECCE in the 1970s, and especially after the International Year of the Child in 1979, was followed by a withdrawal of funds in the 1980s when economic crises threatened formal education programmes. The young child was no longer a priority and budget cuts in many countries affected this group in particular. This occurred in all countries but its effects were even more dramatic in developing countries. In addition, the economic crises affecting most developing countries since the mid-1970s have had an especially negative effect on household-level income (and employment) which in turn has sharply reduced the resources which families and communities have available for child care and education.

17. Where the need for ECCE is felt but is not met by government sources, the lack of solutions creates a gap which is often filled by programmes of limited quality and scope. One example cited are private, commercial programmes of poor quality. Also, Koranic schools are provided in some countries. However, the attention paid to religious education tends to preclude a broader programme.

18. The review by participants showed that many activities were taking place in favour of the young child but that few were integrated. In addition the activities described were not only those dealing directly with the young child but also with, for example, parents - presenting them, in literacy programmes, with important information on child growth and development.

IV. PROSPECTS AND TASKS OF DEVELOPING INTEGRATED ECCE SERVICES IN THE 1990s IN MEMBER STATES (PLANNING AND MANAGING THEIR EXPANSION; GROUPS FOR SPECIAL FOCUS; HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT; FINANCING OF ECCE)

Developing integrated ECCE services in the 1990s

Different challenges in different societies

19. The challenge to integrate services will call for different solutions in different countries. Participants provided some examples of such solutions.

(a) If there is an absence of services, a government or community group may need to allocate money to develop an integrated model project. Alternatively, a group of parents may delegate child care to a relative or paid helper, thus creating a community project that is valid within that culture, and invite visiting health and welfare professionals into this setting.

(b) Communities may develop community-level models and governments may thereafter be responsible for their expansion at provincial or national levels in appropriate ways.

(c) Some developing countries will be looking for ways in which to include a larger percentage of young children in ECCE and the pooling of resources across ministries may achieve this.

(d) Other countries with established facilities for many children will be searching for ways to improve the adult/child ratio, the content of programmes or the effectiveness of integrated services.

(e) In some countries ECCE services of good quality already exist but they seldom reach the whole population and often reach only a limited group. A variety of services needs to be available despite the risk of having to reduce established criteria for quality. Expansion and low cost strategies should be accompanied by monitoring and support systems.

(f) A country may have services which have remained specialized at the health, education or welfare level - a fragmented vision. In such a case, one solution could be the adoption of a national policy and the creation of an agency or centre having responsibility for developing guidelines, recommending projects and distributing government funds to programmes which make appropriate adjustments and improvements.

(g) Some countries expressed concern that the most disadvantaged children and families are not being reached by the services which are in fact intended for them, in spite of the fact that their need is greatest.

They pointed out that there is often a will to reach these people but that the services are seldom or never delivered. Realization of this gap, this failure should spur us to tackle head-on the problem of reaching the most disadvantaged so as to achieve real progress in this matter.

20. Examples were also provided of times when integration might not be an appropriate goal:

when an education centre was of poor quality, e.g. when it did not provide appropriate activities, interactions or methodology for the target group;

when a national policy was unhelpful;

when the moves meant reduced services;

when a specific cultural group wished to retain highly valued provisions or practices.

The illustrations above show that countries which begin to consider integration issues do not always start from the same positions.

Powerful destructive/counter productive forces

21. Strong views were expressed about the need to recognize and act on information showing that not all the forces at work in societies are benign in respect to ECCE. Such forces include the following:

(a) The threat of formal education and didactic programmes moving down the age range.

(b) The tendency of people to become dependent on services and servers rather than being self-reliant and able to ensure their own services.

(c) The impoverished lives of many disadvantaged families especially those living in extreme poverty.

(d) The danger of authorities taking the 'task of enlightenment' seriously without considering the communication and consultation needs of care givers and local organizers.

(e) The strong positions sometimes taken against women and women's work.

(f) The inconsistency, instability, and rapid pace of change in urban life.

(g) The intrusion of the world of work into the world of the child through the stresses of the work place and their transmission into family life.

These factors tend to create climates of opposition which have to be reckoned with.

General recommendations

Two recommendations arose from discussions of Item 3.

22. The first was the need for a basic conceptualization of human development acceptable to agencies and services, and to all levels of societies including the community levels, recognizing that the needs of children in the early years are much more concerned with socialization and values than with academic learning. Training programmes and advocacy statements must sensitize people to the human development needs of this period, seeing the child as a whole person, interacting with a social and physical environment. A good programme could then be seen as one which looks at the various interactions between - the child as a citizen - today and not as a future citizen, and the care givers. Perhaps interactions rather than stimulations should be the developmental key to this period.

23. A second and equally important recommendation was to analyse the audiences in ECCE and improve all communications between them. It is not enough to make a political decision to define what we want to do for children. It is important to consult and involve the participants, the parents and communities in the process and to improve communication at all levels between care givers, NGOs, local communities and ministries.

Some specific recommendations

(a) Advocacy

24. It is essential to educate people about the needs of children and families, and to have a lively debate at all levels of society. It is useful to have tangible successes to point to. In particular, advocacy for young children must reach those who make the political and administrative decisions, establish plans and policies, and allocate public and private sector resources. They need to learn about the quantity of ECCE provisions required; the length of exposure that is desirable, the value of such investment in terms of outcomes (cost-effectiveness) and the necessity for integrated services for children from birth to six years. Arguments and data in the form that is useful to administrators are required. ECCE professionals must plead in favour of children and bring relevant information into the debates of agencies and governments.

One discussant raised the dilemma of advocacy in relation to limited resources, whilst another pointed out that often increasing demand can be a powerful force to increase the resources available to deal with the problem - therefore advocacy should be encouraged.

(b) Legal and administrative frameworks

25. ECCE services should be part of national planning and development. It is essential to have national structures to formulate these plans. Laws and regulations can legitimize and legalize ECCE practices. They can establish the rights of the child, produce a centrally co-ordinated strategy for services, provide standards for provisions or programmes, State requirements for personnel certification, list, review and audit requirements, provide policy and administration structures, and delineate the requirements for interministerial consultation and action. However, such frameworks need to be created with maximum flexibility to allow for development and change in ECCE provisions.

26. Discussants noted that Member States may sign, or ratify, or become a party to international conventions or announce ministerial decrees but unless there are mechanisms to monitor their implementation, such pronounciations can become mere paperwork which does not result in action.

At a central level there is need to consider one co-ordinator if several ministries participate in programme formulation; that lead person needs to be recognized by all players in the programme.

(c) Resources

27. These arise from provider groups - private (commercial) services (as in St. Lucia), public programmes (as in Algeria) and voluntary organizations or volunteer services from community resources (as in Madagascar) and from individuals and families. It should be explicitly recognized that the family is the main 'provider group' particularly in the developing countries. Other sources of help exist in communities; they include university and college

students, retired and unemployed people and relief agencies. Sometimes ECCE programmes arise jointly between two or more such suppliers of resources.

It is important to mobilize existing resources in the community, be they human, financial or material/technological. The community and the family were identified as important resources, supported by a programme co-ordinator at the various levels of community structures.

(d) Training

28. Integrated ECCE services need to consider training at three levels.

Firstly, the managers of integrated services must be introduced to the health, education and welfare aspects of their task, including sensitization to gender, family and community issues, and to tne need to communicate well and consult frequently across agencies and within the hierarchy of management.

Secondly, parents, families, care givers and volunteer workers need access to training, suited to their needs, culturally appropriate and mediated by effective delivery systems.

Thirdly, it is important to identify and train the trainers of care givers as they are very important people for establishing and maintaining the quality of the programmes.

Thus, there is a need to develop appropriate methodologies for training.

(e) Diversification of structures and infrastructures

29. Many options need to be explored: play groups, day care centres, nurseries, kindergartens, pre-schools, family-based programmes, cross-age groups, media options, centralized and decentralized models, and co-management by education and health professionals.

The meeting was told that a kindergarten does not need to be an institution but can be an activity: it is a place for interaction. This is a useful concept and opens up many possibilities for early childhood experiences to occur despite the lack of formal buildings or services.

One original suggestion was the use of young, articulate academic couples who accept equality in parental roles as models and trainers of other couples in child care matters.

30. A distinction can be made between work by volunteers to support a community project and voluntary pre-school services of an institutional kind (kindergarten and play group movements) which are run by associations of unpaid parents but staffed by trained and paid workers.

31. Participants referred often to the theme of care givers as the focus of all efforts to meet the needs of the child. This emphasis ranged from suggestions:

that parent in-service education was the primary target of ECCE,

that parents are participants who shape the services and grow with the responsibility they are given, and

that community-based child care allows for cultural adjustment of programmes in a sensitive manner,

to the pragmatic and economic argument that parents are doing the job anyway and if they are given the organization and the jobs this involves they will develop and expand both their expertise and the services.

(f) Educational programmes: content, material, language

32. Advocates for ECCE need to provide clear accounts of age-appropriate tasks, activities and motivations for children in the 0-6 age group. There is a need to describe the developmental tasks of different age-groups and train professionals about these.

Educational programmes must have mechanisms directed to the on-going development and improvement of human and material resources which should be culturally appropriate.

Examples were provided of interesting ways in which culturally-based toys and activities are being produced. In Malawi a competition among women's groups produced both traditional toys and local versions of non-traditional toys and games of value to pre-schools. Such endeavours respect the values of the culture and speak to the identity of children as members of their culture groups.

(g) Monitoring and evaluation

33. Monitoring mechanisms are a necessary source of feedback on the programme providing data on what is being achieved and where improvements may need to be made. New programmes and attempts to integrate existing areas need to provide data which can be placed before administrators and agencies to support expansion or maintenance proposals.

(h) Research

34. A more comprehensive plan of action research designed to begin before the implementation of a programme and to produce formative evaluations as changes occur may be continued long enough to capture the outcomes of an intervention.

Research may be designed in traditional models with particular attention to longitudinal outcomes. It must address not only innovation but also the conservation of good practices which deserve to persist.

An example of action-oriented research in Malawi was provided (Kalyati, 1989). In a programme for community-based child care systems, information on local child-rearing practices was gathered. When a pilot project in three areas showed that local perceptions of needs and problems differed, it was decided that the design and implementation of the programme would be agreed upon by each community.

There is a particular need to share research between countries, and in particular between developing countries. Such research findings may provide research models and comparative data for advocacy purposes.

As far as agencies such as UNICEF and Unesco are concerned, research should also be highly policy and problem orientated. Efforts to assess the reasons for programme outcomes - positive and negative including an assessment of 'positive' deviance situations, may be particularly useful.

V. CO-OPERATION AT THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS: PRIORITIES AND MODALITIES

35. The discussion on this item began with a presentation of the activities of the agencies, foundations and NGOs present. In their statements some attention was given to on-going co-operation as well as to the potential which exists. These statements together with those which had been made earlier by country representatives provided the basis for the examination of this topic.

Discussion began with an attempt to establish a framework in order to approach the task with clear perceptions. Participants concluded that the following elements were part and parcel of 'co-operation':

knowledge of national and international support systems;

information on the policies and activities of international agencies should be known by all national agencies;

a common agenda shared by donor and recipient;

clear communication of needs and interests;

mobilization of all available resources;

participation at all levels; the best person to take the message to the people must be selected.

36. Some reasons for the failure of co-operation were identified at national and at international levels.

(a) <u>At national level</u>

It was felt that there was relatively little difficulty for groups to agree on who had the knowledge and competence for a given issue. However, in the execution of any programme there is often a struggle over who assumes the leadership role and this must be resolved.

Co-operation on many occasions has led to uniformity. Futher, in some instances, co-operation has stressed the control function rather than technical assistance. Groups were not helped to work together when the main thrust should go beyond that to integrating activities.

(b) <u>At the international level</u>

Sometimes the funding of a project tends to transform it into an agency's/donor's project rather than that desired by the country. As a consequence, targets are not reached, no one identifies with it and the project fails when the donor leaves.

Often, donor agencies are trapped by the demands of their own constituencies which provide the financial resources and establish the conditions for their use. Co-operation is often easier where there is a single source of funds (e.g. from a foundation).

37. In seeking to avoid the difficulties which could result from the factors listed above, strategies to maximize co-operative efforts were explored. These included:

(a) the setting up at national level of a group of all interested parties to discuss their needs, define and follow guidelines, set priorities in order to profit from the available resources;

(b) good communication and liaison between community and national agencies would assist in the co-ordination of activities, and avoid duplication and wastage of material resources;

(c) establishing situations where groups have to co-operate to move forward. One example given was that of a government giving a grant to a group of services and requiring them to co-operate in distributing the funds;

(d) international organizations, foundations and NGOs in liaison with the governments concerned should meet and discuss what each can offer. Information should be exchanged on a regular basis on both successful and problematic actions so that appropriate lessons can be drawn;

(e) where there is evidence of inter- and intra-organizational problems, a joint committee can work together to reach a common understanding about goals, and have a common approach to solutions.

38. The discussions on co-operation fully recognized that all institutions have to prove themselves in the eyes of their membership. However, it was also recognized that it is vital at both national and international levels to explore how human capacity can be built up.

Specific areas

The meeting touched upon a range of issues where wide and meaningful co-operation could take place, but was able to discuss only some of them in detail:

39. Donor co-ordination. The principal responsibility of co-ordinating donor support lies with an individual country. This implies the need for some co-ordinating machinery as well as for a vision by governnent of what needs to be done. To have United Nations agencies, foundations, NGOs and bilateral agencies talking to each other without a co-ordinated national governmental position is often to miss the point.

40. Monitoring and evaluation. There is an urgent need to have available an international group of evaluators, and/or a willingness by different agencies to undertake shared evaluation activities upon request from countries. Further, whilst it is at times important to have external evaluation and auditing of programmes, these should be done in partnership with the persons working at the country level. In addition countries may wish to undertake evaluation of particular relevance to them, but not to the international agency.

41. Advocacy and policy formulation. International agencies can pool their resources in this area, make a joint statement on what is advocated. For example, WHO/UNICEF/Unesco could prepare a joint position statement on the integration of child services and make this known to governments. This approach would have a considerable impact on the formulation of national programmes when presented to governments.

42. Special groups. The meeting noted that it is often easier to mobilize interest and support at the international level by referring to the needs of special groups. One example of a high-risk group which could benefit from international co-operation are orphans, children without care givers, often the result of natural and man-made disasters. International organizations like Unesco could provide information on expertise and relevant experiences in neighbouring countries and share it through networking.

43. Technology and educational materials. It would be far more interesting to promote joint ventures and exchanges in the area of technology at country and regional levels than foist the work of one country on another. The idea of a video encyclopedia about Child Development was explored. It was felt that this could be a joint venture with Unesco serving as co-ordinator. This would make available a variety of messages about the world's children leading towards better human understanding. Regarding educational technology, in general, co-operation should provide guidelines to be followed at the local level to facilitate exchanges in this area and eliminate fear of technology being imposed by one country to another.

44. Educational materials developed should be exchanged and then may be adapted to the local culture for use bearing in mind the need to facilitate their development in keeping with the socio-economic and cultural contexts. Strategies should be used to get all parties together so that there can be an exchange of materials, tools and instruments.

45. Networking. The development of networks was seen as critical to the exchange of information and materials. In this context participants supported the proposal of Unesco to establish a network but cautioned that it should take into account, and work with existing networks. International organizations should realize that at times it is only through sponsoring the development of capability at the national level that networks will function smoothly.

46. The costs of co-operation are high both in terms of time and in terms of finance. The most important aspect is to develop strategies which are capable of being sustained over time at resource levels which correspond to likely levels of national and local resource availability. It is only by recognition of this that co-operation which aims at integration of activities and mutual enrichment can really succeed.

VI. UNESCO'S INTERSECTORAL PROJECT ON THE YOUNG CHILD IN THE FAMILY ENVIRONMENT (1990-1995)

47. The aim of the action planned under this project is to safeguard and promote the development of young children and, in particular, of their learning abilities. Even before they get to school, children go through a period that is crucial for their physical, mental and emotional development and determines the success of future education. Yet the family, which plays a primordial role during that period, has fewer and fewer resources - particularly in developing countries - for seeing to the child's development and for identifying and combating anything that may threaten that development. To contribute to the development of the child it is therefore necessary, first and foremost, to help the family.

In order to concentrate efforts on urgent needs, this project will focus on three main areas where the action is particularly relevant to the development of the young child: (i) nutrition and early childhood stimulation; (ii) parent/child/family interactions (child rearing practices); and (iii) childhood disabilities.

Many of these problems can be attenuated by more widespread application of the latest findings concerning early child development, by promoting parent education and by creating or strengthening community support systems adapted to the different socio-cultural settings.

The objectives and main lines of action of the project, these three areas are designed to:

promote the dissemination and use of existing knowledge on the development of the young child, and of information on successful policies, programmes and activities concerning the young child and the family - by acting as a clearing-house for information exchange; in co-operation with non-governmental organizations, foundations and United Nations agencies, particularly UNICEF, WHO, an international network ('Interchild') will be established grouping together existing networks of specialists and institutions in different disciplines. This network, by its very nature, will encourage interdisciplinarity in the three main areas concerned and will improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of research findings and innovative experiences. The information tool will be a Newsletter. This will assist Member States in the design, development and implementation of expanded integrated programmes and projects in early childhood care and education; contribute towards the elaboration, testing and evaluating of cost-efficiency approaches for early intervention programmes in a selected number of Member States;

contribute to the improvement of parents' knowledge of child development and of their skills in child care and education in a selected number of Member States, of which at least half would be among the least developed countries, by encouraging the expansion of parents' information and education services; by helping the organization to launch community-based family support programmes;

increase and strengthen human resources in early child care and education by promoting the active participation of communities and voluntary organizations and by the training of professional and para-professional personnel at all levels in the relevant sectors.

48. The report was introduced by some members of the Task Force highlighting the diversity of approaches which will be integrated into this project. The participants were impressed with the presentation made by the intersectoral team and they expressed concern at the low level of resource allocation which gave the impression that, in comparison with other Unesco activities this project has not been accorded the importance which it merits. Furthermore, the importance of the period of young childhood for the poorest families cannot be overestimated. It corresponds to an important field of mobilization touching the fundamental aspirations of the very poor that their children should have a better life than they had.

Promoting the development of the learning abilities of young children must be fundamental for any other activities which Unesco undertakes; we therefore recommend that as the 'Young Child in its Family Environment' project evolves the funding should be progressively increased to match its significance for educational success.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A.	AREA OF CONCERN	ADVOCACY
	OBJECTIVES	To convince/inform parents, politicians and the general public of the important needs of children, and how they may contribute to meeting them. To suggest reasons to individual services, e.g. health, welfare, education, etc. of the need for integrated Early Childhood Care and Education services.
	EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS	A joint position statement worked out by agencies, foundations and NGOs which could be widely disseminated. A concerted campaign which involves public discussions/debates of concerned 'Partners'. Development of slogans, posters, etc., audio-visual materials to support the campaign.
	PERSONS/GROUPS TAKING ACTION	UNICEF, Unesco, WHO, NGOs and other interested partners and governments.
B.	AREA OF CONCERN	DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION
	OBJECTIVES	To support advocacy to sensitize the public at large, policy makers, administrators, educators, parents, etc., about research findings concerning human development and in particular the child's development. Sharing of experiences.
	EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Newsletters. Video encyclopedia. Exchange visits.
	PERSONS/GROUPS TAKING ACTION	Unesco, UNICEF, WHO, governments, NGOs, institutions, researchers, other interested professional groups.
C.	AREA OF CONCERN	COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GROUPS PROVIDING ECCE SERVICES
	OBJECTIVES	To improve communication between the various groups at the international, national and local levels in order to work and co-operate more effectively in the interest of the young child. To decrease/remove duplication of actions and thus to cut down on unnecessary costs - human and material.

	EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Organize meetings of various groups to discuss/ develop common goals and joint relevant activities in favour of children. Exchange visits, ideas, materials, at all levels. Development of networks.
	PERSONS/GROUPS TAKING ACTION	At international levels between United Nations agencies, foundations, NGOs, etc. At national levels and between all partners
D.	AREA OF CONCERN	LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORKS
	OBJECTIVES	To convince government of the necessity and importance of including integrated ECCE services in national planning and development. To improve and co-ordinate relevant strategies at the various levels.
	EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Formulation of policies on integrated ECCE services including the legal and administrative frameworks and budgets. Use of the Convention of the Rights of the Child as a framework for preparing legislation.
	PERSONS/GROUPS TAKING ACTION	Governments, United Nations agencies, foundations, NGOs and others.
E.	AREA OF CONCERN	RESOURCES
	OBJECTIVES	To increase human and material resources and to use these resources effectively. To obtain the co-operation and contribution of all possible contributors.
	EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Identify all possible contributors at local, national, international levels as well as individuals. Identification and preparation of projects for funding by agencies/foundations. Co-operation/contributions for the purposes of providing/improving integrated ECCE services for children. Can be in the form of food, personnel, safe buildings, play space, equipment and other needed materials.
	PERSONS/GROUPS TAKING ACTION	International agencies, NGOs, foundations, governments, professional and business groups, communities, parents, individuals, religious and voluntary groups.

F.	AREA OF CONCERN	TRAINING
	OBJECTIVES	To improve/provide good quality integrated ECCE services for children. To use/develop effective and varied strategies and qualitative measures in keeping with the socio-economic and cultural contexts.
	EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Training of all levels of personnel involved with integrated ECCE services, e.g. managers, trainers, care givers, volunteers, parents, relevant professionals, etc. Organize workshops, training courses, formal/ non-formal, appropriate for each target group. Develop culturally relevant and appropriate programmes and materials for use (e.g. training packages). Exchange of visits at regional and subregional levels.
	PERSONS/GROUPS TAKING ACTION	Governments, NGOs, voluntary services, foundations, United Nations agencies.
G.	AREA OF CONCERN	CO-ORDINATION
	OBJECTIVES	To develop effective co-ordination appropriate for the delivery of integrated ECCE services.
	EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Provide and exchange information on a variety of effective co-ordination: successes, failures, lessons learnt.
	PERSONS/GROUPS TAKING ACTION	Unesco, NGOs, governments.
H.	AREA OF CONCERN	INTEGRATED ECCE PROGRAMMES
	OBJECTIVES	To provide appropriate and relevant programmes in the provision of integrated ECCE services - for the enhancement of the total development of the child.
	EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Develop programmes addressed to parents to help them in their child rearing skills and in their roles as the child's first educator. Organize interdisciplinary training courses/ workshops for those working directly with children. Develop materials (locally available) for use in the ECCE programmes. Promote the writing and production of story and picture books in keeping with the local culture.

	PERSONS/GROUPS TAKING ACTION	Governments, NGOs, United Nations agencies, foundations.

I.	AREA OF CONCERN	MONITORING AND EVALUATION
	OBJECTIVES	To develop and/or improve integrated ECCE programmes qualitatively through use of feedback obtained through monitoring and evaluation. To identify/train the required personnel to provide relevant data obtained through monitoring and evaluation of programmes/projects.
	EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Discuss and share data with 'Partners' concerned in order to change, develop or modify on-going activities. Organization of an inter-agency team of evaluators.
	PERSONS/GROUPS TAKING ACTION	Governments, funding agencies, Unesco.

J.	AREA OF CONCERN	RESEARCH
	OBJECTIVES	To promote innovation and conserve good practices re. ECCE - based on research findings. To conduct research in order to provide the best possible services for young children - in ECCE projects. To share relevant research findings between developed and developing countries - so as to learn from each other.
	EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Dissemination of research findings world wide. Members of networks to provide summaries of research findings written in everyday language. Design of comparative studies which could be funded by foundations. Training of community workers/educators in the collection of data. Development of data banks of information with criteria which would allow for regional comparisons.
	PERSONS/GROUPS TAKING ACTION	Research institutions, NGOs, researchers, users of research, etc., Unesco, WHO, UNICEF, foundations.

K.	AREA OF CONCERN	CO-OPERATION
	OBJECTIVES	To improve on-going co-operation at national and international levels.

	To find new ways of exploiting other potentials for co-operation.
	To avoid duplication of activities and wastage of resources.
EXAMPLES OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS	Identify the needs, interests and resources of all 'PARTNERS' and share this information between them.
	Prepare and use a common agenda shared by the concerned 'Partners'.
	Disseminate relevant information (e.g. policies of each 'Partner') to national 'Partners'.
	Regular consultations between persons working in the interest of the young child at international and regional levels, e.g. preparation and conduct of meetings.
PERSONS/GROUPS TAKING ACTION	Governments, funding agencies, NGOs, United Nations agencies, all interested Partners.

ANNEX I

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ANNEX II

AGENDA

1. Opening of the Meeting

2. Election of the Bureau

3. Review of some significant existing practices in providing integrated ECCE Services (i.e. care, education, health, nutrition, etc.); success, failures, lessons learnt in policy formulation and implementation

4. Prospects and tasks of developing integrated ECCE Services in the 1990s in Member States (planning and managing its expansion; groups for special focus; human resources development; financing of ECCE)

5. Co-operation at the national, regional and international levels: priorities, modalities

6. Unesco's Special Project on 'The Young Child and the Family' (1990-1995)

7. Adoption of the Conclusions and Recommendations

8. Closing of the Meeting